

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I am in favor of proposed bill #6142 and bill #6143.

I am the father of Joshua Matthew Metell, whose life was lost on April 18, 2008 because of a crash that was caused by a man with a history of repeated offences. The man was driving under a suspended license, as he pulled out of his driveway in a borrowed truck with a trailer in tow with a car on it. He was across both lanes of Route 203 in North Windham. My son, who was on a motorcycle, had no right of way, and took evasive action to avoid hitting the trailer and car only to hit a cement base of a mail box and sand that sent him into a utility pole ending his life.

My wife and I were returning from a meal at a local restaurant and had to be redirected around our son's accident site. We didn't know it was our son at the time. We were told by two state troopers when we returned home that "that our son didn't make it. The accident happened one half mile from our house. Just the day before we had played golf and Josh told me he had made his last payment on his car and was going to take golf more seriously as he would have more money. I was devastated, why? How could this be?

Josh was a first grade teacher at Natchaug, an inner city school. He was a model citizen and had a heart for the Willimantic community. In 2004 he had started a 3on3 basketball tournament during the summer, to help get the inner city youth and young adults interested in something, to limit negative activity on the streets. He was working at Alternate Incarceration Center at the time. The event grew in popularity and in 2010 the event was recognized by CT General Assembly who gave a citation acknowledging the impact the ball tournament had on the community. Our family presents two awards at Natchaug school, Joshua Metell Positive attitude award and What Family Means To Me. This inspirational essay is written by fourth graders and we give three winners scholarships. Joshua was focusing on administrative courses to future his education in this field. What a huge loss it affected many.

We learned about the offender and his many violations for repeatedly driving with a suspended license as well as many other violations. He lied to the police officers, said he wasn't driving, his wife was. He admitted having a meth treatment that morning as well as having three beers "after the accident". He had seven years of violations, many of which were driving under suspension. After Josh's accident in the same year, he was arrested on June 16, 2008 for driving under suspension, no insurance, no registration, misuse of plates. That was less than two months after Joshua died. He was caught again in January 2009 for the same charge. On one occasion I witnessed him speeding and turning left onto Rt. 203 from Rt. 6, right in front of me, tires squealing from the sharpness of the turn to beat the light which had already turned red. Another instance, he pulled out in front of me as I was driving to the post office. I followed him as he took all the back roads to the Chaplin package store at 11:30AM.

My family and I were able to talk with the State Prosecutor about our loss and why there were no laws concerning repeat offenders and more severe restrictions for their actions. He identified the repeated offenders as "scofflaws" because they scoff at the law.

It is too late in our case, but for many others this may be the law that will prevent future tragedies from occurring by removing the "scofflaw" or certainly limiting their activities to the place of obeying the law and if not then more severe penalties.